

News Release



U.S. Department of Labor
Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.
Release Number 04-1947-NAT

For Immediate Release
Date: Oct. 4, 2004
Contact: Jane Norris or Mike Biddle
Phone: 202-693-4676 or 693-5051

U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao Launches First Phase of New Recovery and Employment Initiative for Injured and Wounded Veterans

WASHINGTON —After visiting with wounded veterans at Walter Reed Army Medical Center today, U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao announced the first phase of ***REALifelines***, a comprehensive new program to provide individualized job training, counseling and re-employment services to each and every veteran seriously injured or wounded in the War on Terrorism.

The Recovery and Employment Assistance Lifelines (REALifelines) initiative is a joint project of the U.S. Department of Labor, the Bethesda Naval Medical Center and the Walter Reed Army Medical Center. It will create a seamless, personalized assistance network to ensure that seriously wounded and injured service members who cannot return to active duty are trained for rewarding new careers in the private sector.

“Our country owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to the brave young men and women who have defended our nation with such honor in the Global War on Terror,” said U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao. “These wounded veterans are to be treated with the respect and dignity they deserve and all of us need to do all we can to help them transition successfully to careers in the private sector.”

The program creates a new team to work full-time with America’s recovering wounded. Dedicated professionals stationed on site will meet personally with each wounded veteran at the Walter Reed and Bethesda Naval Hospitals. They will help each person discover his or her special interests and unique talents. They will help each veteran find the right career path to suit his or her special needs. And they will be there to answer questions and provide insight into the processes of choosing job training opportunities and career paths. In addition, to ensure that everyone is served, a new national follow-up system will be established to ensure that each wounded veteran receives personalized assistance as he or she returns home and transitions to the private sector.

A key part of the program will be the services available at the Department of Labor’s nationwide network of One Stop Career Centers. In addition to assisting wounded veterans, job training and employment services will also be made available to spouses in families that have suffered an active duty casualty, as well as to family members who have temporarily left their jobs to be with their loved ones during recovery.

Participating with Secretary Chao in the launch of the ***REALifelines*** program were Maj. Gen. Kenneth L. Farmer, Jr., Commanding General of the Walter Reed Army Medical Center and Rear Adm. Adam M. Robinson, Commanding Officer of the Bethesda Naval Medical Center.

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